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Chinese discussions about Indian culture around the May Fourth Era: Some remarks on a conceptual aporia

Joseph Ciaudo

Introduction

- 1 A decade ago, in his address at the 66th session of the Indian History Congress, Prof. Kamal Sheel averred that “the earliest Chinese discourses on India [were] based on a recognition of the latter as the land of an equally ‘civilised’ culture arising out of the varied and fruitful interaction between them in which Buddhism played a leading role. In contrast, the modern Chinese discourses emanate from the framework of nation state and are based on comparative studies of their respective polity and economy” (Sheel 2007). According to Sheel, by the end of the 19th century, the Chinese started building up the narrative of an India that would be China’s “failed other”. Such a narrative emerged from “the construct of nationalism in late imperial China which linked the rising threat of Western imperialism to lack of modernisation and formation of a nation”. To put it in other words, the emergence and diffusion of modern political concepts such as “state” or “nation” operated as factors of historical change. These concepts displaced the Chinese outlook on India. Rebecca Karl has presented this matter with much pertinence in her book *Staging the World* (Karl 2002). She has noted that ‘India’ became a common *topos* of late Qing political discourses. Its “lostness” and the “slavishness” of its people were omnipresent themes (Karl 2002, 159–163). It even became a topic for a new historiographical genre: the histories of the lost countries (*wangguo shi* 亡國史). Presenting India under the label of a “lost country” (*wang guo* 亡國) was instrumental in the redefinition of Chinese *Weltanschauung*; the political demise of India was a counter-example, or a scary reminder that China could also be put under the control of Western powers.

- 2 Yet, to come back to the idea of a transition from a positive culturalistic outlook toward a negative nationalistic one, one could underline the fact that in defending his position, Sheel has ignored an important element: the vocabulary to speak about what we nowadays call cultures or civilisations was developed later than, or at least simultaneously with, the vocabulary of state and nationalism. Speaking of “equally ‘civilised’ culture” here is an anachronism or at least a very interpretative translation of Chinese discourses into contemporary categories. Sheel has considered that the rise of ‘the modern vocabulary of the nation’ affected the Chinese outlook on China, but he forgot that there was also no ‘vocabulary of culture and civilisation’ before the end of the 19th century, be it in China, in India or in the West¹. And it took time for this vocabulary to set in. To give a striking example: the “anthropological interpretation of culture as ‘the civilisation of a people (particularly at a certain age of development)’ first appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1933” (Morris-Suzuki 1995, 761).
- 3 If by the end of the Qing dynasty, Chinese intellectuals realized that they were part of an internationalized world with a new centre and various edges, perhaps they also started being aware of cultural diversity. The problem was not simply laid out under the dichotomy opposing a modern West to a traditional East. In terms of historiography, we have long moved away from the ‘Levenson narrative’, which proclaimed that Chinese nationalism emerged as “a denial of culturalism” (Levenson 1958, 105). Moreover, one can no longer summarize the ‘cultural issue’ into the opposing categories of traditionalism versus westernisation. Embracing modernity did not necessarily mean throwing away Chinese cultural identity. Therefore, in order to shed a new light on the Chinese attitude toward India and what we would call its ‘culture’, it appears necessary to reconsider under which neologisms and modern concepts the Chinese intellectuals approached their southern neighbour. What did the Chinese say about India with the culture-related conceptual repertoire that was newly made available by the end of the 19th century – the polysemic terms *guocui* 國粹 and *wenming* 文明 and then *wenhua* 文化? Was India still regarded as an “equally ‘civilised’ culture” through this vocabulary or did the positive narrative supposedly conveyed by these *guo*- and *wen*-cognates also turn sour? Furthermore, as concepts are both “causal factors and indicators of historical changes” (Koselleck 1972, xiv; & 1995, 116), could it be hypothetically envisioned that the emergence and the rise of *wenhua* participated in a positive reevaluation of India, that contrasted with the devaluation produced by *wangguo*?
- 4 To quote Madhavi Thampi, in the past decades the Sino-Indian relationship has become “a topic of mounting interest in academic and wider circles” (Thampi 2013, 202). Yet, in regard to modern intellectual history, suffice to say that the spotlight has always been put on two specific trajectories: first, late Qing intellectuals’ attitude toward India (notably Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) and Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1968-1936) usually in between 1901 and 1907²; second, Rabindranath Tagore’s (1861-1941) trip to China in 1924 and its consequences. This second area of interest is certainly the most discussed topic, since it concerned both intellectual history and the history of literature. There is now an impressive body of academic literature on Tagore’s trip, and on the new links between China and India that stemmed from it³.
- 5 Yet, there is an inexplicable lack of studies concerning the period between 1907 and 1924. During these almost two decades, notably renowned for the profound intellectual

transformation they witnessed with the New Culture movement, the Chinese had certainly much to say about India. As a matter of fact, we are now aware that they were increasingly interested in the growing Indian nationalist movement. Many articles covered its different aspects, in particular in the *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌) (Deepak 2001, 14). This magazine dedicated a special issue to “Gandhi and Modern India” in 1922 during the Civil Disobedience movement. Brian Tsui has now uncovered the Chinese interest in Gandhism. He has shown that “Chinese intellectuals took the Indian freedom movement seriously” and that the Indian nationalist struggle served in China as a medium “to interrogate Western modernity as a social or cultural formation” (Tsui 2014, 63). Indeed, having browsed other documents than the one studied by Deepak and Tsui – notably the Shanghai-based journal *Shishi xinbao* 時事新報 – I can renew their claims and attest that in the early twenties, almost no week passed without an article published on what was happening in India. Despite the articles often being of reduced size, it seems nonetheless that the topic was of interest for the readership.

- 6 As such, the research on the Chinese attitude toward India has already underlined the fact that India was a political object of interest during the May Fourth era. It remains, however, to be verified whether ‘Indian culture’ was an object of inquiry. Between the mid-1910s and the mid-1920s, an important series of controversies that have often been framed under the label “debate(s) about the Eastern and Western cultures” (*Dong Xi wenhua lunzhan* 東西文化論戰) emerged⁴. Much ink has already been dedicated to the arguments and the rhetoric of these debates, notably regarding the thorny problem of whether China ought to ‘westernise’ itself. However, hardly any one investigated the place of India in these discussions⁵. After all, Chinese intellectuals were not limited to two intellectual possibilities – either westernise or defend Chinese culture – they could also have decided to ‘indianise’ China. Despite this option being unlikely, it was a theoretical possibility. India could have been a source of inspiration to rethink what it meant to be part of a bigger ensemble such as the region of Asia or the East⁶. Some scholars have suggested that India, as a ‘representative of Eastern civilisation’ was instrumental in the development of the arguments held by conservative figures who upheld a critical outlook toward the West. In an article on Xu Dishan 許地山 (1893–1941) and Indian culture, Chen Pingyuan once wrote that “during the May Fourth era, the traditionalists (*fugu pai* 復古派) were the biggest proponents of Indian culture (*Yindu wenhua* 印度文化) and they carried forward the idea that India was a representative of Eastern civilisation (*Dongfang wenming de daibiao* 東方文明的代表) not only in order to defend the Chinese ‘national quintessence’ (*guocui* 國粹) but also to fight the New Culture movement (*xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動)” (Chen 1984, 34). However, one may wonder if this was really the case at a general level and not simply for Xu. Also, was this position expressed in the words used by Chen?
- 7 It is this thesis that the present article wishes to challenge by reconsidering where and how ‘Indian culture’ was located in the Chinese discourses during May Fourth so-called ‘debate(s) about the Eastern and Western cultures’. Besides, in order to keep the problem of Tagore’s visit distinct from what Chinese thought more generally of India – no single man is the embodiment of the entirety of one continental culture – I will mainly focus on the period before the debate was annexed by the fights over his lectures in 1924. I argue that although some Chinese intellectuals had a genuine interest in the Indian culture – understood from an etic point of view or, using a Koselleckian terminology, from our contemporary categories of knowledge

(*Erkenntniskategorien*)– considered from an emic point of view, there is in the language of the sources (*Quellensprache*) no interest for an ‘Indian culture’. More exactly an *Yindu wenhua* 印度文化 that could be considered on an equal footing with the Western culture (*Xifang wenhua* 西方文化) and the Chinese culture (*Zhongguo wenhua* 中國文化) is nowhere to be found. Unlike what Chen Pingyuan has argued, India had no place in the Chinese *Kulturpessimismus*. Furthermore, it appears that most of the Chinese intellectuals, like their Japanese neighbours, used the term ‘Eastern culture’ (*Dongfang wenhua* 東方文化)⁷ without really considering it as an equivalent for the Western notion of Orient or as an embodiment of both China and India. It was often but a synonym of Chinese culture only⁸. As such, the emergence of a modern concept of culture under the token *wenhua* did not lead to the highlighting of an Indian culture that would be autonomous from Indian political institutions. Furthermore, Indian *wenhua* was always considered through the prism of Buddhism.

- 8 The article will proceed in three phases. First, I will briefly consider the place of India in the intellectual discursive field during the late 1910s and early 1920s. Second, I will discuss the place of Indian culture in the rhetoric of several intellectuals. Special attention will be given here to the expression ‘Eastern culture’ (*Dongfang wenhua*) and how its use incidentally scrapped India out of the debates. The last part of the article will then question whether Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988) was really an exception in this intellectual landscape. Finally, I shall conclude that India as a *wenhua* had no significant place in the debates, and that such an aporia should invite us to reconsider our outlook on how Chinese intellectuals envisioned cultural diversity in the May Fourth era.

What place for “Indian culture” in the discursive field?

- 9 To begin our inquiry on the May Fourth era intellectuals’ attitude toward Indian culture, one should notice that two important changes had taken place since the beginning of the century: India as an object of inquiry entered new academic institutions⁹, and the multiplication of intellectual newspapers and magazines offered a space where texts about India could be published and become easily accessible for a broader readership.
- 10 Considering the problem first from the angle of education, one needs to admit that India, and notably ancient India, was progressively given a place in the emerging University system. Thanks to the impulse of Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), a course on Indian philosophy was opened in 1917 at Beijing University (Wang 1998, 98), the chair being attributed to the young Liang Shuming, who was to publish two years later his *Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (*Yindu zhexue gailun* 印度哲學概論) (Liang 1919). The Indologist Alexander Von Staël-Holstein (1877-1937), who emigrated to China after the October Revolution in Russia, also taught Sanskrit, the history as well as the philosophies and religions of ancient India at Beijing University from 1922 to 1929 (Wang 1998, 99). Liang Qichao, who was still one of the most important Beijing-based scholar of that time, also harboured a vested interest in the relation between China and India, notably regarding Buddhism¹⁰. In 1922, Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893-1964) also started teaching and researching the history of Indian philosophy and Buddhism in Nanjing. The results of his research would notably begin to be published in 1924 in the periodical *Xueheng* 學衡. At Yenching University, Jian Youwen 簡又文 (1896-1978) also started teaching classes on the history of Indian religions in 1924 (Meyer 2014, 318).

- 11 Nor was it impossible to find texts that dealt with Indian culture in publications generally available to the public. To name but a few, in an article published in the *Eastern Miscellany*, Li Jihuang 李繼煌 (1891-1960), who was a student in Japan at that time, discussed the Indian conception of the world and how Indians pictured the idea of an Indian nation or state, by considering the sources for such ideas in classical literature and religions (Li 1918)¹¹. Teng Ruoqu 滕若渠 (dates unknown) also published in the same journal an article on classical literature in Sanskrit in which he concluded that these literary materials “should be considered in the discussion about Eastern culture(s)” (Teng 1921, 70). However, as noted before, one should admit that, aside Buddhism-related literature, most of the articles that dealt with India were mainly focused on its political and economic trajectories. Besides, authors who presented elements of Indian culture to the general public were often lesser-known intellectuals, whose impact on society was minimal.
- 12 Another feature of the articles related to ‘Indian culture’ was that they all had more or less something to do with Tagore. The richness of Indian intellectual and artistic life was often approached through the lens of the relevance of the 1913 Nobel Prize. References to him came up in almost every article related to the topic. Many of his texts, notably his poetry and novels, were also translated into Chinese¹². And, as a great deal of research has already demonstrated, they were not without influence in the development of modern Chinese literature. Tagore also appeared as soon as 1916 as “a sharp critic of modern Western civilisation” (Das 2005, 90). Actually, the Indian critique toward Western civilisation was presented to the Chinese audience before Tagore’s visit of 1924. *Sadhana, the Realization of Life* (Tagore 1913), the book that popularized Tagore’s cultural discourse in the West and in Japan (Hay 1970, 85–86) was translated into Chinese in 1921 (Taigu 1921). The translator Wang Qianjia 王錢家 (dates unknown) is a completely unknown figure. His text was, however, issued in four editions by 1926. It was seemingly an economic success. In fact, a growing body of literature about the Indian poet started being published in the early twenties, especially after it was announced that he would visit China.
- 13 Articles that dealt with the cultural discourses of other great Indians thinkers were, however, less numerous. They mostly were concerned with M. K. Gandhi (1869–1948). In the *Eastern Miscellany* special issue about the civil disobedience movement, an article by Xu Hualu 徐化魯 (1902-1994) suggested that Gandhi agreed with the idea that the post-war Western *wenhua* was bankrupt (Hualu, 1922, 72), but it did not expand on the subject. Xu simply presented him as the “Indian Tolstoy” (Hualu 1922, 75). Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之 (1896-1986) portrayed Gandhi as an adversary of Western material culture. The comments were however scarce. When his text brought forward the question of defending “traditional culture” (*chuantong de wenhua* 傳統的文化), he only gave a short description of the Brahmo Samaj movement, depicting it as a fierce opponent to the invasion of Western capitalism and Christianity (Yuzhi 1922, 76). Gandhi was placed in its continuity but exclusively as a social reformer. The only text to clearly present Gandhi’s position was Yi’an’s 亦庵 article on the principle of *Satyagraha*. In it, the author established a list of 15 propositions by Gandhi concerning modern civilisation (Yi’an 1922, 84–85)¹³.
- 14 These brief remarks bring forth two important elements: first, with perhaps the exception of Buddhism, Indian culture was not often discussed as a historical or cultural object of interest located in the past – despite ancient India having its place in

the academia –; on the contrary, it was always connected with what contemporary intellectuals had to say about it. The omnipresent reference to Tagore speaks for itself. Let us underline that this was also the case in the field of literature. Aside from Tagore's novels and poetry, it seems that there was not much enthusiasm for classical Indian literature. According to Gal Gvili, it was only in 1929 that Xu Dishan “effectively launched the study of Indian literature in China” by translating *Folk Tales of Bengal*, a book written in English by the reverend Lal Behari Day (1824–1894) (Gvili 2015, 173). Second, in the emerging academia, India was mainly approached through two new categories of knowledge: philosophy and religion. This phenomenon as well as the progressive institutional and intellectual reorganization of the Chinese Buddhist religion propelled Buddhism to the centre of the discussions.

- 15 However, it is worth emphasising that writing about India and its culture (considered through our analytical categories) is one thing, speculating on the very concept of an ‘Indian culture’ as a concept present in the sources is quite another matter. Indeed, one needs to wonder what terminology the Chinese intellectuals used to speak about what we locate now under the term ‘Indian culture’ or ‘Indian civilisation’. Despite the fact that it elaborated on themes that we would be tempted to locate under the ‘culture’ category, the above-mentioned article by Li Jihuang spoke only once of *Yindu wenming* in the entire text (Li 1918, 71). The author never employed *wenhua* or *guocui*, as if they were not very operative overarching concepts. Teng's article used *wenhua* but mainly in relation to the East and not India, or simply as a general or universal category¹⁴. Following Reinhart Koselleck, one can say that “a word becomes a concept only when the entirety of meaning and experience within a sociopolitical context within which and for which a word is used can be condensed into one word” (Koselleck 1979, 119). Furthermore, a concept is “an inescapable, irreplaceable part of the political and social vocabulary (...) Basic concepts combine manifold experiences and expectations in such a way that they become indispensable to any formulation of the most urgent issues of a given time” (Koselleck 1996, 64). If Li had no uses for *Yindu wenhua* in his text, that means that it was not an indispensable part of the vocabulary to express his opinion on the matter.
- 16 Let us therefore consider when Chinese intellectuals started to speak about India in terms of *wenhua* – I shall immediately abandon *guocui* as I was never able to find any reference to India's *guocui* except in the writing of Zhang Taiyan (see notably Zhang 1907) – and let us see if it produced a change in the attitude of intellectuals toward India. One should, however, be careful; the first occurrence of the phrase *Yindu wenhua* does not equate to the emergence of *Yindu wenhua* as a concept. The multiplication of occurrences simply pinpoints a period of particular interest (Ifversen 2011, 84–85). Since my purpose here is simply to identify a corpus of interest, I did not go data mining in the manner of Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng (Jin & Liu 2008), but used only a common database of historical research¹⁵. As *wenhua* started progressively to differentiate itself from *wenming* from the mid-1910s on (Huang 2011, 15–23), one should first check whether *Yindu (zhi or de) wenhua* or *Yindu (zhi or de) wenming* were common expressions between the beginning of the Republican era and Tagore's visit. To put it bluntly, the answer is no.
- 17 Between 1911 and 1925, only four different articles included both “India” and “*wenhua*” in their titles or subtitles. They were a translation of an article by Lyman Abbott that discussed Tagore's position (Abotuo 1917), a critical presentation of Tagore's idea by Hu

Yuzhi (Yuzhi 1921), one text by Wu Jiazhen 吳家鎮 (dates unknown) on “Civilisation of India, Past and Present” (Wu 1922), and the welcoming address Liang Qichao wrote for Tagore. Concerning Wu’s article, which is the only text having the exact “*Yindu wenhua*” expression in its title, one should remark that it proceeded in an encyclopædic manner, presenting first briefly in introduction the race, the geography and history of the Indians before moving on to a longer presentation of their religions, their philosophical schools, their languages, India’s social structure, Indian classical education, and its contemporary political situation. The last part of the text was the reproduction of a friend’s letter on Indian cultural institutions (*wenhua jiguan* 文化機關)¹⁶ and how the past was protected in India. Wu concluded with a presentation of Tagore. Here again, India as a *wenhua* was partly approached through the prism of Tagore. The same could be said of the use of *Yindu wenming*, since the only articles mentioning the two terms in their title were a one-page discussion of Tagore’s division between “material” and “spiritual” civilisation (Shen 1920) and an interview of Tagore by Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990) (Feng 1921). One could also mention an article by Yu Shen 玉深 (dates unknown) about whether Indian women could represent the oriental civilisation(s) properly (Yu 1923). A brief section of Tokiwa Daijō’s 常盤大定 (1870-1945) *History of Indian Civilisation* (1907) concerned with the translation of Buddhist scriptures in Chinese was also translated in 1920.

- 18 If we consider books, the situation is also very troubling. While ‘Histories of Chinese culture’ emerged as a new genre during the 1920s, notably because of Liu Yizheng’s 柳詒徵 (1880-1956) enterprise (Hon 2004), there is no equivalent publication of ‘Histories of Indian culture’ in Chinese during the entire Republican era. To my knowledge, only two books with such titles were published before 1949. And both were translations: *Yindu gudai wenhua* 印度古代文化 in 1936, a translation of a book by Takeda Toyoshirō 武田豊四郎 (first published in 1925) and *Yindu wenhua shi* 印度文化史 in 1948, a translation of several texts from A. A. MacDonell. Even among common history books, one must admit that Indian history was not a heated topic during the May Fourth era. The first Chinese *History of India*¹⁷ that I have identified in this period was again a translation: in 1925, a certain Tengzhu 滕柱¹⁸ translated *India* by John Finnemore (1863-1915), a general history of India written for the younger public (Tengzhu 1925). It was followed by Liu Bingrong’s 劉炳榮 (dates unknown) *History of India* in 1926¹⁹. Chen Chalu 陳茶祿 (dates unknown) then published *Outline of India’s General History* (1928) – a book that can be considered a milestone in Indian studies, for it was one of the first to admit that “among the four ancient countries that form the Asiatic *wenhua*, Babylon, Persia, India and China, (...) only India and China remained and could nowadays contribute to the *wenhua* of the world” (Chen 1928, 1), recognising *de facto* that India was also a ‘culture’ worth considering and not simply a ‘lost country’. Yet by consulting this simple bibliography, it appears that not only was ancient India still vastly unknown to the general public before Tagore’s visit to China, but during the Republican era much of the historical and anthropological knowledge on India was accessed via a Western or Japanese mediation.
- 19 One should never judge a book by its cover or a text by its title. Therefore, let us consider the presence of the expressions *Yindu wenhua* and *Yindu wenming* in the full text of two famous periodicals that have been digitalised: the *Shenbao* and the *Eastern Miscellany* – the second being the most important one for our research, since previous scholars have already pointed out that it was a publication sensitive to India’s plea in the modern world. I found in it only three articles mentioning the exact expression

Yindu wenhua between 1911 and 1924²⁰. They were all published in 1921 – they are a two-part text by Chen Jiayi discussed below and a text presenting Gandhi, in which it was simply written that when returning to India in 1895, Gandhi “opposed the Indian government, and promoted Indian culture by planning to replenish the inner life of the Indian people”. The article ended on a positive note by saying that Gandhi’s movement showed that Indian people could contribute to world politics and world culture (W 1921, 34–35)²¹. According to the *Eastern Miscellany* database, the next article containing the exact term *Yindu wenhua* would only be published in 1937. *Yindu wenming* appears in 11 texts between 1911 and 1925²². As such, one cannot say that they were common expressions. The situation of the *Shenbao* is even more suggestive, as no article published in the period here under scrutiny used the term *Yindu wenhua*. Only one piece used *Yindu wenming*, but it is simply a travel note and contains no description or discussion of what this ‘Indian civilisation/culture’ was (Zhang 1919).

- 20 The exact expressions were as such not very common. If we open up our scope of inquiry, and consider all the texts published in the *Eastern Miscellany* between 1911 and 1925, one finds 280 which feature both *Yindu* and *wenhua*. But one faces here the limit of this lexicometric approach since, in those 280 texts, sometimes the two words were apart and unrelated to one another. Furthermore, approaching the matter from a purely quantitative approach remains problematic since we lack any entry on the meaning and signification of these words in context. As already noted in footnote n°14, the syntax of the phrases in which those words appear ought to be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. Likewise, there are many occurrences where one can read that India received or adopted a Western *wenhua*, but it would be an overinterpretation to consider that because the authors spoke of a Western *wenhua*, they would necessarily consider that there also exists an Indian *wenhua*. After all, around that time, India was usually depicted as a “half-civilised” country in the Western and Japanese literature. Besides, since *wenhua* was first understood in the sense of the universal concept of Civilisation with a capital C, and was then progressively associated with the idea of a West and an East, dividing therefore this universal Civilisation into two hemispheres²³, it is not sure that in linguistics terminology, ‘India’ and ‘the West’ could stand on the same paradigmatic axis – which means that one could not replace all the occurrences of ‘Western’ with ‘Indian’. Hypothetically, Indian *wenhua*, as Chinese *wenhua*, may, after all, have appeared as a hyponymisation of Eastern *wenhua*. We should also wonder what did ‘the West’ mean for a Chinese person at that time, since it was also a very modern concept in every part of the world (Bavaj 2011).
- 21 It is therefore important to look into the matter by considering the words within the argumentative process of the texts. Quantitative analysis can only pinpoint potentially interesting corpora. Actually, one should note that the expression *Dongfang wenhua* came up in 16 articles published by the *Eastern Miscellany* between 1921 and 1922²⁴, while the expression was first used in 1921 in the *Shenbao*, and was used in some 21 articles before Tagore set foot in China on April 12th, 1924. It is also within this time frame during which the *Eastern Miscellany* dedicated one of its special issues to Gandhi, that Liang Qichao, Liang Shuming and Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887-1969) also started to raise doubt about westernization and promoted Eastern culture(s). As such, we may have here a relatively homogenous period for dealing with the question at hand. If Indian culture was a hyponym of ‘Eastern culture’ or at least a representative (*daibiao* 代表) of Eastern culture, we could find here much information regarding the attitude of

Chinese intellectuals toward India, and the place of the concept of 'Indian culture' in their discourses.

Indian culture: a representative of Eastern culture?

- 22 As indicated above, there was not much specific presentation or discussion of either *Yindu wenhua* or *Yindu wenming*. However, India was often mentioned as an example in descriptions of Eastern *wenming* or *wenhua*. This way of framing the debate is not without problems for our inquiry. As the Chinese language does not mark the plural, it is often difficult to know whether a text opposes one Western culture/civilisation to one or several Eastern cultures/civilisations. A few rare indicators can help us to sort out this problem. For instance, in his article "Western culture and Eastern cultures" (*Dongyang wenhua yu Xifang wenhua* 東洋文化與西方文化), the Buddhist Reverend Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947) wrote "every Eastern culture" (*ge Dongfang wenhua* 個東方文化) (Taixu 1924, 1, my emphasis). Nevertheless, most intellectuals were not that sensitive to this problem of disambiguation.
- 23 Before considering in detail the early twenties' tendencies identified previously, let us first set the background by taking a look at the two articles that Zhu Qianzhi had identified as the starting points of the debates over the Eastern and Western cultures, and see how India fared in them. Chronologically the first text was "The Fundamental Differences between the Thought of the Peoples of East and West" (*Dong Xi minzu genben sixiang zhi chayi* 東西民族根本思想之差異) written by Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) and published in 1915. In this text, while using the term "East", Chen tended to think first and foremost about China. It is very obvious in his rhetoric when dealing with the opposition between East and West.

西洋民族以戰爭為本位，東洋民族以安息為本位。儒者不尚力爭，何況於戰；老氏之教，不尚賢，使民不爭，以佳兵為不祥之器。故中土自西漢以來，黠武翦兵，國之大戒。佛徒去殺，益墮健斗之風。世或稱中國安息於地上，猶太民族安息於天國，印度民族安息於涅槃，安息為東洋諸民族一貫之精神。（Chen 1915b, 1)

Peoples of the West privilege war, while peoples of the East privilege peaceful livelihood. The Confucians were never eager to fight relentlessly, let alone go to war; Laozi taught "not to give pride of place to the worthy, so as not to fuel competition among the people" and "to consider weapons, however beautiful, as ominous instruments". Therefore on Chinese soil since the Western Han dynasty, militaristic and aggressive stances have always been a great national interdict. The followers of Buddha who were opposed to killing gave more wind to this degenerating approach. One may say that the Chinese people find peace in returning to the Earth, the Jewish people find peace ascending to the Heavenly Kingdom, the Indian people find peace in entering Nirvana. Searching for peace is a common spiritual feature shared by all the peoples of the East.

- 24 Here Chen Duxiu regarded the Chinese, the Indians and the Jews as Easterners. However, in listing the peoples of the East, China always came first. Furthermore, its situation was always explained with more details. Of course, it is obvious that Chen was more knowledgeable about China. But in the end, the cultural differences between the various peoples of Asia were simply neglected. Despite this, China and India were both described as "representatives" of Eastern civilisation; the only topic that mattered to Chen became the opposition between China and Europe, an opposition that in his mind overlapped the gap between traditional and modern societies (Cf. Chen 1915, 1). Yet the

location of India in Chen's list of examples raises a question: why did he mention the Jews before the Indians? If Chen spoke first of what he knew best, this would be surprising. However, the second text identified by Zhu, Li Dazhao's "Fundamental Differences between Eastern and Western Cultures" (*Dong Xi wenhua genben zhi yidian* 東西文化根本之異點) – a text famous for democratizing Du Yaquan's earlier dichotomy between the West as a "culture/civilisation of activism" (*dong zhi wenming* 動之文明) and the East as a "culture/civilisation of quietism" (*jing zhi wenming* 靜之文明) (Cangfu 1916)²⁵ – also put India in a peculiar place. When Li was listing the countries that were members of Eastern civilisation, India was mentioned after Indochina, Malaysia, and Myanmar (Li 1918, 57). Such a position in the lists raises doubt about the attitude Li and Chen may have had toward India.

- 25 In addition, a common topic in discussions about Indian culture was its relation with Chinese culture throughout history²⁶. In the case of Chen Duxiu, he rejected the very idea that India ever had any influence on China. For him, "the main idea of Indian doctrines was to depart from this world", therefore "India neither inspired nor produced a fundamental change for the Chinese people" (Chen 1916, 1). Chen considered the Indians' religious beliefs – as any religious beliefs for that matter – to be stupid (*yu* 愚) and responsible for the modern demise of India (Chen 1918, 157). Whatever one's opinion on the question of the introduction of Buddhism in China, it seems to us that Chen's position was very partial, not to say a caricature. Yet it was far from being an isolated case; many of the famous intellectuals of the May Fourth era downplayed India and its role in the intellectual history of China. Discussing the introduction of Buddhism in China often led them to despise India as a land of religions. In his essay on the "digestion of civilisation" (*wenming zhi xiaohua* 文明之消化), Cai Yuanpei stated that the philosophical richness of Indian civilisation had been stained by the foul smell of religion (Cai 1916, 416). For Cai, when China "digested India", it luckily did not convert to a religious *Weltanschauung*. Since Cai Yuanpei was advocating the replacement of "religion with aesthetic education" (Cai 1917), Indian culture was an example of what the Chinese should not aspire to. The metaphor of digestion can also be found in Hu Shi's 胡適 (1891-1962) writing, notably in his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, in which he considered that "after the Tang dynasty, Indian philosophy progressively became a part of Chinese thought and civilisation" (Hu 1919, 5). For Hu Shi, China had digested the Indian culture during the Six Dynasties. Therefore all the good things which the Indians had to offer had been passed on to the Chinese, while India was left to wither. In the end, the argument largely shared was that if China took anything from India, it was the best it had ever produced. All the supposedly negative elements of Indian culture did not cross the border²⁷. It is worth noting here that Indian culture or its supposed core – be it philosophy or religion – was irremediably identified with Buddhism. By extension, Indian culture was always discussed in terms of spiritual life. It was a common *topos* to note that India had developed religion or its spiritual civilisation (*jingshen wenming* 精神文明) and not its material one (see e.g. Sanwu 1921, 27-28). The focus on religion was negative for most Chinese, notably the radicals²⁸, but some authors thought differently. For instance, the importance given to religion in the Indian culture became a positive element for Liu Yizheng. In his *History of Chinese Culture*, he claimed that the lack of religious sentiment was a Chinese weakness that was revealed by the spread of Indian culture in China (Hon 2015, 86). One should also underline that the discussions about Indian *wenhua* or *wenming* and its relation to China never put forward the material objects (except

religious scriptures) that moved from one side of the border to the other; only Buddhism reigned. This Buddhism-centred approach to Indian culture also underlines the fact that debates about India were almost always conducted from the perspective of Chinese history. Other intellectual traditions such as Brahmanism or Hinduism were only mentioned by a few selective authors; Islam was completely absent from the debates, as if they had never heard about the Mughal Empire.

- 26 These remarks being made, let us go back to the major problem of how the conceptual relation between India and *Dongfang wenhua* was established. In 1920, Chang Naide 常乃惠 (1898-1947) produced a summary of what most people used to argue about this topic, and added his own comments and criticisms. For Chang, civilisation was a universal process, and it was an error to compare the level of civilisation according to geography. In his mind, there was no East-West division (Chang 1920, 277). The problem was temporal. He therefore embarked on a criticism of the advocates of Eastern civilisation(s). According to him their position could be summarized under four points:

第一，世界上有兩個文明；一個是西洋，一個是東洋。第二，這兩個文明的根本精神正相反對。第三，西洋文明的發源地是歐美，東洋文明的發源地是中國和日本。第四，前世紀之末，是西洋文明極盛的時代，目下他的破綻漸發現了，應當請出東洋文明來補救他的流弊。(Chang 1920, 269, my emphasis)

First: In the world there are only two civilisations: one is the West, the other is the East. Second: The fundamental spirits of these two civilisations are in radical opposition. Third: The sources of Western civilisation are Europe and America; *the sources of Eastern civilisation are China and Japan*. Fourth: The end of the past [*i.e.* 19th] century was the time of Western civilisation apogee. Now that we can progressively witness its collapse, we should make use of Eastern civilisation to save it from its shortcomings.

- 27 In his article Chang reviewed these four propositions, but he did not make any comment about India. It was discarded from the picture, as if he had been blind to the problem, or as if *Dongyang* was clearly a geographical notion that did not encompass India. Otherwise, India may have existed on the map of Asia, but it was not even part of 'civilisation'. There is something very unsettling in this Chinese chauvinistic appropriation of the whole of Asia or the East, because it was almost never based on any argument. For both the supporters of "Eastern culture(s)" and their opponents, the 'East' often worked as a synonym for China. Furthermore, the transition from one word to the other was frequently made without any consideration for semantics. See for example these two sentences taken from a lecture delivered by Zhang Junmai in 1922:

然東西文化之本末各不同，如西洋人好言徹底，中國人好言兼容，或中庸；西洋好界限分明，中國好言包容。(Zhang 1922, 122)

From the roots to the branches, Eastern and Western cultures differ from each other. For example, the Westerners are good at thoroughly understanding the thing they talk about, while the Chinese like to always find a common ground – or the golden mean – when talking with others. The West excels at drawing clear distinctions, China excels at talking in terms of inclusiveness.

- 28 Here is an unsubtle shift from the Eastern culture to the Chinese. Zhang's opposition between East and West actually boiled down to an opposition between the West and China. And he was not the only one to do so. Tying the East to China was a figure of speech popular beyond the political and scholarly discussions. In June 1921, Wang Guangqi 王光祈 (1892-1936)²⁹ rejoiced that the Germans were interested in the Eastern

wenhua, without ever mentioning India. He limited his illustrations to cultural and intellectual venues related to China in Germany (Wang 1921a). Two months later he would start mentioning India in relation with the notion of Eastern *wenhua*, by describing the visit of Tagore in Germany (Wang 1921b). These two articles were later to be reproduced together in the first issue of *Asian Arts and Studies* (*Yazhou xueshu zazhi* 亞洲學術雜誌), giving to India a semblance of participation to Eastern *wenhua*. However, in the second issue of the magazine, another article entitled “German Studies of Eastern *wenhua*” (author unknown 1921) would again only present what German scholars said about Confucius and Laozi. There was in the text a brief reference to Tagore, who was associated with Tolstoy (1828–1910), but no real comment on the study of India. In fact, all the articles published around this time which mentioned India as a part or as a representative of Eastern *wenhua* never discussed Indian culture as an anthropological body of practices, knowledge and representations that had a history. In the context of my reflection here, this goes without saying since my point is that such a conception of culture would be anachronistic. But at the same time one needs to insist on the fact that they had no interest for what traditional Indian literati were doing either. Whatever the meanings *wenhua* was to purport at that time, Indian *wenhua* was regarded as useless if not sterile. When Chinese intellectuals spoke about India, it was only to channel Tagore’s wish for the Asian to be heard by the Westerners. They endorsed his general position, but rarely discussed in detail what he was saying about India, nor the very arguments he put forward³⁰.

- 29 As a matter of fact, Indian *wenhua* had no place in the debates of the time because it was rhetorically scrapped. Chen Jiayi’s 陳嘉異 (dates unknown) very academic³¹ article, “Eastern culture and our [historical] responsibility” (*Dongfang wenhua yu wuren zhi daren* 東方文化與吾人之大任) published in 1921, offers an insight into how the rhetorical disappearance of India operated. After having surveyed a series of definitions of what culture (*wenhua* 文化) is, Chen declared that he would speak about Eastern culture in regard to the Chinese nation. It was therefore to be expected that India was not to have an important place in his text, despite the affirmation that again “China and India were both representatives for contemporary Oriental culture” (Chen 1921, n°1, 20). In his text, Chen shed light on four features of Oriental cultures (the term is apparently considered as a plural), but here again the reasoning was fallacious. The four points he put forward almost always dismissed India. We do not need to enter in his arguments, but simply note how he adjusted his speech. In the first section he writes, “Eastern culture (this section concerns especially China)” (*Dongfang wenhua (ci zhuan jiu Zhongguo yan)* 東方文化(此專就中國言)) (Chen 1921, n°1, 21), in the second “Eastern culture (this section can also be somewhat valid for India)” (*Dongfang wenhua (ci lue jian Yindu yan)* 東方文化(此略兼印度言)) (Chen 1921, n°1, 28), in the third “Eastern culture (this section also concerns only China)” (*Dongfang wenhua (ci yi dan jiu Zhongguo yan)* 東方文化(此亦單就中國言)) (Chen 1921, n°2, 9), and in the fourth again “The Eastern culture (this section can also be somewhat valid for India)” (*Dongfang wenhua (ci lue jian Yindu yan)* 東方文化(此略兼印度言)) (Chen 1921, n°2, 14). Also, when a specific point somehow concerned India, he did not give any corresponding example. To him, only the Chinese culture was important, the Indian was not even discussed. Chen was completely aware that he described *Dongfang wenhua* in a manner that would not be appropriate for India, but that did not lead him to add any remark in his text. Neither did commentators on this text raise this point (see for instance Jiangu 1921).

- 30 A few years later, Chen would renew his plea in favour of *Dongfang wenhua* and the academic societies whose goal was to study it. Once again, India would be almost completely absent from his discourse. Affirming that China is the only old country that succeeded in maintaining the historical continuity of its culture, Chinese *wenhua* was, according to him, “the outstanding [figure] of Eastern culture” (*Dongfang wenhua zhi qiaochu* 東方文化之翹楚) (Chen 1924; 1). But this time, interestingly enough, he had a few comments on India:

印度文化。以佛教思想為最高。而佛教大乘精義又惟中國為獨得。是則保存佛典
闡明佛教。實吾國應有之責。(Chen 1924, 7)

Buddhist thought is the most elevated element of Indian culture; yet, the quintessence of the Greater Vehicle was only attained by China alone. As such the conservation of the Buddhist canon and the promotion of the Buddhist doctrine ought to be our country's responsibility.

- 31 Despite not being a famous intellectual figure, Chen Jiayi's case is here quite emblematic as he played an instrumental role in the “Society for Eastern Culture Studies” (*Dongfang wenhua xueshe* 東方文化學社). This society which aimed at “organising” (*zhengli* 整理) and “disseminating” (*xuanchuan* 宣傳) Eastern *wenhua* (author unknown 1924a) was officially established in 1924, but the idea for its inception emerged around 1922 (Luo 1924, 1)³². Intellectual societies and institutions whose goal was to promote Eastern *wenhua* started to become quite common around that time. Liang Qichao for instance opened an “Institute for Oriental Culture” at the University of Nankai (Tianjin) in 1922³³. But when one considers the teachers who instructed at this institute, one finds no specialists on India (see the news about the Institute in Editor 1922a and 1922b)³⁴. In the case of Chen's “Society for Eastern Culture Studies”, the denegation of India is almost assumed. In an official document describing the goal and the organisation of the society, Luo Zhengwei 羅正緯 (1848-1951) wrote:

現在要推我國為最高。因為東方文化的代表。本事中國和印度兩派。但是印度到了中世紀以後。文化衰歇。(Luo 1924, 4)³⁵

Now we need to push China to the foreground, because, despite the fact that China and India are both representatives of Eastern culture, India's culture declined after the medieval period.

- 32 The founding declaration of the association made no reference to India except for one sentence: “Indian knowledge (*xueshu* 學術) was concentrated in *Chan Buddhism*” (author unknown 1924b, 11). As such, it is not simply the so-called radicals of the New culture that despised Indian culture; numerous scholars that have been up to now designated as the “Eastern culture clique” (*Dongfang wenhua pai* 東方文化派) also had strong doubts about what India could offer to the world culturally speaking. The only intellectuals who positively evaluated India were often the Buddhists, but here again it was also considered that Chinese Buddhism was superior to India's. In their minds, India had already played its historical role when it passed on Buddhism to China, and now the quintessence of its culture was being expressed in a more elegant and sophisticated manner by the Chinese. Such line of reasoning is clearly similar to what Okakura Kakuzō had already put forward in his *Ideals of the East* when he wrote that Japan was “the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture” (Okakura 1903, 5). The Indian and Chinese pasts had served as historical referents for the Japanese in their attempt to build a new cultural narrative. When they were negatively considered, they were simply rejected as hurdles to modernization. When

they were considered as positive; it was believed that the Japanese had taken the best of it and had magnified it³⁶. India's role in the Chinese narrative was quite similar.

- 33 As such, the promotion of "Eastern culture" in order to save the West from the bankruptcy of its civilisation was not considered as a global process. It was mainly China's mission to save the West, and by extension the world. Eastern culture did not mean 'Chinese culture and Indian culture' but 'Chinese culture and Indian culture within Chinese culture'. Mentioning Tagore or even Gandhi was but a means to strengthen the legitimacy of the Chinese own critique of the West. It seems that their positions regarding the fact that India also had something to give to the West were never seriously discussed, and therefore probably not even considered. Yet, before concluding, one should give one more chance to the possibility of India being culturally favoured by some prominent Chinese intellectuals and consider the special case of Liang Shuming.

Liang Shuming: an advocate of Indian culture?

- 34 At a time when the East-West dichotomy was monopolising the intellectual field, one book changed, or at least tried to change, the framework. In 1921, Liang Shuming published a volume in which the West, China and India were apparently put on the same level. In the words of Thierry Meynard, "Liang challenged the myth of a so-called Oriental culture that placed China at the centre and India on the periphery" (Meynard 2011, 31). The publication of Liang Shuming's *Cultures of East and West and Their Philosophies* (*Dong Xi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學) in 1921 was a key moment in the history of the cultural debates. Cai Yuanpei did not hesitate to write that "Liang Shuming's book had raised the most important problems in contemporary philosophical debates" (Cai 1923, 381). It was the first – and perhaps only³⁷ – book to seriously put India, China and the West in a tripartite comparative framework. Liang Shuming's thesis was highly debated, and attracted many attacks and criticisms³⁸.
- 35 The core of Liang's book can be summed up as follows³⁹: for Liang, every culture, like every life, anchors itself in a fundamental will (*yiyu* 意欲). This will can be oriented in different directions (Liang Shuming 1921, 352). Facing the problems of life, man can either "go forward", "adjust his own intention", or "turn back and move backwards" (Liang 1921, 381–382). Besides, Liang notes that life takes place in three different realms: the material (*wuzhi* 物質), the social (*shehui* 社會), and the spiritual (*jingshen* 精神) (Liang 1921, 379–381). This typology starts off his approach toward Indian, Chinese and Western cultures. They are all distinguished by attitudes toward the world. With its will to go forward, the West has focused its culture on the material world; Chinese culture with its will oriented toward harmony (*tiaohe* 調和) epitomizes the adjustment of one's intention in the social world; finally, Indian culture turns its back to the world and addresses the problems of the spirit. For Liang, "the vast majority of Indians do not want to preserve their lives, they usually want to leave the world – they call it *nirvāna*" (Liang 1921, 436–437)⁴⁰. Furthermore, each culture is built on a different philosophical system. "The life of the West consists in that intuition applies to the intellect; the life of China consists of the intellect applying to intuition; the life of India consists of the intellect as it applies to direct sensation" (Liang 1921, 378–380, Wesolowski's translation slightly modified).
- 36 In Liang's understanding, Eastern cultures were not lagging behind Western modernity. They simply took a different path. He even turned upside down the thesis of the backwardness of Eastern cultures: for him, they were advanced or literally "ripe too

early” (zaoshu 早熟) (Liang 1921, 526). China and India had tried to address the problems of society and spirit before solving the material necessities of life. In the short term, Liang therefore called for a cultural reorientation: China ought to focus herself on the material world – i.e. adopt Western culture. But once the material life is comfortable enough, China will have to go back to its own cultural trajectory⁴¹. Finally, in the future, when both the material and social problems are handled, China will have to walk the Indian path and solve the spiritual problems. In Liang’s eyes, Indian culture was therefore not appropriate for the present time (Liang 1921, 528), but one day, it would be. From this perspective, Liang did not belittle Indian culture. On the contrary, India was located at a nexus in Liang’s soteriological discourse: ultimately, it will free the whole of mankind from spiritual suffering⁴². However, let us enter into the details and observe what Liang’s Indian ‘culture’ really was.

- 37 Thierry Meynard noted that Liang’s “culturalist approach led [him] to assign religion the central role within his three cultures: the social religion of Christianity in the West, the psychological and moral religion of Confucianism in China, and the transcendent religion in India” (Meynard 2011, 37). But in the case of India, it is not just any transcendent religion: it is only Buddhism. In fact, in Liang’s writing, India’s culture would be better described as “an Indo-(weishi-) Buddhist culture” (Wesolowski 2005, 380). Liang only spoke about Buddhism, and he considered it mostly through a Vijñānavāda perspective⁴³. Once again earlier Indian systems of thought were disregarded, and Islam was again completely omitted.
- 38 In 1922, some reviewers had already raised problems with this way of framing the issue. Although most of them did not give their opinion on what Liang had said about India because they considered themselves not qualified enough to make critiques on this matter, Li Shicen 李石岑 (1892-1934) hit the nail on the head when he wrote that Liang was producing too many reductions in his presentation of India as well as Buddhism: “Vijñānavāda is neither the totality of Indian culture nor the totality of Indian philosophy” (Li 1922, 494). According to him, Liang conflated and put in the same basket “religion”, “Buddhism” and “India” (Li 1922, 502). For Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀 (1886-1973), *Cultures of East and West* was not a book that compared cultures, it was a work of comparative philosophy (Zhang 1922, 482). Zhang Dongsun’s remark here is a breath of fresh air because, for once, it does not hesitate to spell out the problem. All the debates around *wenhua* in the early twenties were not concerned with the modern anthropological concept of “culture” – hence the embarrassment in translating *wenhua*. They often tend to condense these so-called cultures into a limited number of phenomena, usually religion and/or philosophy. But even in this context, and even if *wenhua* did not mean culture or civilisation, how can we explain that Liang Shuming, a professor of Indian philosophy at Beijing University, could only associate Indian philosophy to Buddhism? Did he not have any knowledge of the six traditional Indian schools?
- 39 Actually, Liang knew of these schools for he had presented them in his *Outline of Indian Philosophy* (Liang 1919). However, once again, it is obvious that his book had been written from the perspective of a Buddhist, since he described them as “heretical paths” (waidao 外道). Furthermore, he preferred calling them “philosophical religions” (zhexue de zongjiao 哲學的宗教) (Liang Shuming 1919, 60). For him, “Indian schools were to be understood as religions, with the religious quest coming first” (Meynard 2011, 43). Liang’s understanding of Indian philosophy was only partial but as rightly noted by

Meynard, the “*Outline of Indian Philosophy* antecedes both the modern research on Indian philosophy, and the modern editions of Indian texts. Therefore, we cannot expect Liang’s research to meet modern standards of scholarship” (Meynard 2011, 72). As such, like all his contemporaries, Liang considered the importance of religion as the most distinctive feature of Indian culture. But he reduced the religious life of the Indians to Buddhism.

- 40 Considered from the tripartite framework, Liang’s attitude toward India may have seemed positive. But in reality, if we enter into the details of the text, India was a still a contemporary ‘failed other’:

我們就來看他一看：其物質文明之無成就，與社會生活之不進化，不但不及西方且置不如中國。他的文化中俱無甚可說，唯一獨盛的只有宗教之一物。而哲學、文學、科學、藝術附屬之。於生活三方面成了精神生活的畸形發展，而於精神生活各方面又為宗教的畸形發達，這實在特別古怪之至！ (Liang 1921, 393, my emphasis)

Let us take a look at [Indian culture]: its material civilisation has produced no achievements, and its social life has not known any evolution; [in this respect] it does not attain Western standards or even China’s. *In its culture there is nothing to talk about.* Its only accomplishment is religion. And its philosophy, literature, sciences, and arts all depend on it. As to the three realms of life, it has produced a twisted development of its spiritual life, and among the many aspects of spiritual life, it also had a warped advancement toward religion. This is really awkward!

- 41 Despite the fact that Liang had saved India from the East-West dichotomy, his attitude toward it ultimately shared much with his contemporaries; his Indian culture was Buddhism-centred, and his Buddhism Vijñānavāda-centred. For him there was nothing to discuss in India aside from that. Liang was not interested in an anthropological study of India; the only ‘Indian culture’ he spoke about was in fact a part of what India had transmitted to China. One might have expected a more balanced view from someone who taught Indian philosophy at Beijing University. But in the end he only spoke of essentialised and uprooted Western, Chinese and Indian philosophies that could fit into his model.

Conclusion

- 42 In sum, it appears that ‘Indian culture’ (under the token *Yindu wenhua*) was not yet an operative concept in Chinese intellectual discourse during the May Fourth era⁴⁴. Understood from an emic point of view, the value of Indian culture was always downplayed, or at best ignored. Although Tagore’s, and to a lesser extent Gandhi’s culturalist discourses started to be heard in China, their positions regarding how India could save the West from its own demise were hardly listened to. Chinese neoconservative thinkers brought them forward as critics of the West, but the Western sickness was only to be cured by the Chinese antidote. When affirming that Eastern culture could offer salvation to the world, they did not use the term ‘Eastern culture’ (*Dongfang wenhua* 東方文化) as an embodiment of both China and India. It was often but a synonym for Chinese culture only. India was rhetorically excluded from the Chinese debates on the cultures of East and West.
- 43 It seems that the richness of the Indian past did not capture the interest of Chinese intellectuals, except for Buddhism. Texts and discussions about other Indian traditions and practices were very difficult to be found in publications addressed to an educated

but general audience. This Buddhism-centred approach to the question was probably motivated by the religious beliefs of the actors in question – most of the scholars who dedicated a part of their work to Buddhism or to how Buddhism came into China were Buddhists – but one can also wonder whether this focus was not a means to reflect on contemporary Western cultural transfers with reference to a historical precedent. Simultaneously, one may wonder whether Chinese intellectuals were not following the examples of some Japanese thinkers, such as Okakura Kakuzō who regarded his own country as the producer of the quintessence of Asian culture. It is an idea that, for instance, lurks behind Chen Jiayi's texts. Chinese intellectuals were appropriating the whole East.

- 44 Yet, one should go beyond the simple acknowledgment that Indian culture was no object of inquiry for the Chinese intellectuals. The elements presented in this article should invite us to reconsider what the Chinese meant by *Yindu wenhua* and even *wenhua* alone in regards to the usages of these words. If one agrees with Wittgenstein that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (Wittgenstein 2010, 43), one should perhaps reframe one's understanding of these words through Chinese discourses and not the other way around. The relative absence of discussion about ancient India using the term *wenhua*, compared to the overwhelming presence of Tagore, may inform us that this word had not at that time a historical ethnographic component. Within this context, speaking about *wenhua* necessarily meant participating in contemporary-oriented speech.
- 45 Likewise, it may be a little too hasty to criticise the Chinese intellectuals in their limitation of Indian *wenhua* to Buddhism. If such a proposition sounds very reductive, if not utterly false, when used by any 21st century writer, maybe *Yindu wenhua* really meant Buddhism in the early twenties; it is simply that *wenhua* ought not be translated as our contemporary ‘culture’. Let us keep in mind that translation operates between languages but also between time periods. Let us imagine: what if Liang Shuming was right in his description of India? The following lines may seem like unnecessary word parsing, but what if *wenhua* was not at that time a stabilized lexeme (*wenhua*) but more of a syntagma: *wen-hua*, a “transformation (*hua*) through patterns or texts (*wen*)”? What if for a phenomenon to be named a *wenhua*, it were necessary that it had produced a transformation of China? We would need a *wen*, understood as texts, ritual practices, arts, patterns, etc., that would *hua* – transform positively – China. Through this reading, one could logically admit that Indian *wenhua* was only Buddhism. Indian Buddhism changed the face of China, not Brahmanism, Vedic literature, or anything anyone would locate behind the contemporary phrase ‘Indian culture’. Although it is laid out in oversimplified terms, this very China-centred reading hypothesis is worth considering; for, as we have just shown, Chinese discussions of ‘Eastern culture’ were already Chinese-centred. India was discussed from the point of view of what China had refined of it. Maybe Liang Shuming was right: *Yindu wenhua* was really Buddhism. The corollary of this reasoning would, however, set a real and more provocative challenge to Chinese intellectual history. What if, by the same logic, *Xifang wenhua* was not “Western culture”, but only the Western “patterns” (*wen* 文) one could import to transform (*hua* 化) Chinese society or grammatically more correct “a transformation by Western patterns” – science, democracy and so on? In this regard, one should remember that if *Xifang wenhua* was a term used to describe a world far away, it also designated a real presence in city-ports and international settlements: entire series of Western patterns were already on Chinese soil, only waiting to conquer the whole country. Furthermore,

when we say that Chinese intellectuals wanted to import Western culture, did they really want to have it all or simply the relevant parts that would restore China to its superior 'rightful' place?

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NOTES

1. Laurence Schneider wrote that at the end of the 19th century Chinese scholars discovered “culture” (*guocui* 國粹) as “a special body of native literature and art as a thing-in-itself, independent of and even more fundamental than the political and even social institutions which until then had been intimately associated with it” (Schneider 1976, 57). However, during the 20th century this word was to be replaced by another neologism: *wenhua* 文化. *Wenhua* was at first a synonym of *wenming* and was often used to translate “civilisation” (see e.g. *A Modern Dictionary of the English Language Translated into Chinese* 1913, 114). However, it soon gained its independence and denoted the modern anthropological notion of culture. Despite not being totally satisfying regarding the methodology (see in comparison the Korean case studied by Kim 2015), a description of the emergence of *wenhua* in contrast with *wenming* was documented by Fang 2003 and Huang 2006 & 2011. Yet, a clear explanation of the often-mentioned transition from *guocui* to *wenhua* (e.g. Liu 1995 or Hon 2003) remains to be given. In studies concerned with ancient China, *wen* 文 has often been understood in the sense of culture/civilisation. However the meanings encompassed by this character included a broader semantic field. Its uses were also not the same. When we translate *wen* into “culture”, we not only translate from one language to another, but we also bring a term from a bygone time in the language and the cognitive categories of ours. In his history of the concept of culture and civilisation in the West, Jorg Fisch spoke of “culture without the concept of culture” (*Kultur ohne Kulturbegriff*) when he expanded on the Greek notion of παιδεία (Fisch 1992, 682–683). It is my belief that one could also say that the ancient Chinese had what we would call (from an etic point of view) a culture or a civilisation, but not a concept to express it in its modern form (an emic point of view). Culture, as well as ‘civilisation’ are after all very modern political notions – basic concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) in a koselleckian sense – whose destiny is connected to many concepts of the European *Sattelzeit* such as ‘history’, ‘progress’, ‘state’ or ‘nation’. See also Bénétou 1975 on the Western history of these concepts. In his study of Bengal “culturalism”, Sartori went to the extent of affirming that “the history of the culture concept in Bengal [could] be treated neither as a local deviation from, nor as a late reiteration of, an essentially Western intellectual form”; he proposed to investigate it “as a spatially and temporally specific moment in the global history of the culture concept” (Sartori 2008, 5). Despite this, he rejected the perspective of considering ‘culture’ simply as an importation from the West; he nonetheless regarded it as a very modern and globalized concept that “articulated a claim about the fundamental ‘underdeterminedness’ of human subjectivity – the freedom of subjectivity from determinations of objective necessity such as biology, nature, economy or society” (Sartori 2008, 21) and was therefore a clear product of modernity. The same remark could apply in the case of China.

2. Cf. Geng 2002; Shimada 1990, 76–83; Liu 2008 & 2012; see also Nicolas Idier’s contribution to the present volume. Wang 2007 is perhaps the only research that has tried so far to thread together in a book several studies concerning the attitude of some Chinese intellectuals and authors toward India. One should note that Kang, Liang and Zhang are usually the only authors studied regarding this topic at the beginning of the 20th century (people such as Ma Xulun 馬叙倫 (1885–1970) who, for instance, translated from Japanese several texts on Indian religions has been

disregarded so far; Su Manshu's 蘇曼殊 (1884-1918) work is only discussed by Wang 2007, 159–176). The conclusions of these studies always point toward the ambivalent attitude of these writers; on the one hand, they praised Indian culture, while, on the other hand, they elaborated India as a political counter-example.

3. Concerning Tagore's trip see notably Hay 1970 and the more nuanced Das 2005. On Tagore's reception in China cf. Zhang 1994. Despite it being a failure, Tagore's journey to China was to open a series of new interactions between India and China such as Tan Yunshan's 譚雲山 (1898-1983) participation in the Cheena Bhavana in Santiniketan (studied by Tsui 2010) or the lesser-known visit of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) to China in 1944. Recently Tagore has become a topic privileged by Indian and Chinese scholars in their desire to reconsider the relation between the two countries, see notably Tan 2011. Yet, one may wonder if scholars participating in this dynamic have not sometimes exaggerated the impact of Tagore in China to promote a political agenda.

4. See notably the collection of articles compiled by Chen 1985. As early as the Republican era, Chinese intellectuals were clearly aware of the ongoing controversies. In 1923, Du Yaquan 杜亞泉 (1873-1933) was already publishing a collection of articles titled *Criticizing the cultures of East and West* (*Piping Dong Xi wenhua* 批評東西文化) (Cangfu 1923). In 1935, Zhu Qianzhi 朱謙之 (1899-1972) also identified a “question over the cultures of East and West” that emerged around 1915 (Zhu 1935, 1).

5. This affirmation should, however, be nuanced in the research dealing with Liang Shuming who gave much thought to the Indian culture problem (see below).

6. After all, Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覺三 (1863-1913) had coined in 1903 the famous sentence “Asia is one” (Okakura 1903, 1), and around the same time Asianism and Pan-Asianism became important political projects that hoped to foster an Asian transnational cooperation while insisting on socio-cultural traits shared by the Asians. This dynamic was notably important in Japan where intellectuals coming from the four corners of the continent could meet. Yet one should probably keep distinct the discussions about Asia that fall into the category of regionalism, and the debates over the East-West dichotomy. While the East-West dichotomy was largely inherited from the Western Orientalism postulate of an almost ontological division of the world into two cultural hemispheres – a division that would also overlap with the ‘Self’/‘Other’ and ‘Dominant’/‘Dominated’ dichotomies produced by a colonial West – Asianism emerged through a progressive enlargement of ‘Asian cooperation’. Except for people like Okakura, it is legitimate to say that India really entered in the Asianism discourse in the late 1910s, early 1920s (cf. Saaler 2011; Weber 2018, 110). Before that time, Asianism was mainly built on the affirmation that the Chinese, the Japanese and the Koreans, and sometimes the Vietnamese, embodied a “shared race” (*Tongzu* 同族) and possessed “shared writings or patterns” (*Tongwen* 同文); even in later periods the question of the unifying link between those three (or four) countries would remain at the core of Asianism discourses. Since I could not find any Chinese discussion about an “Asian culture” (*Yazhou* or *Yaxiya wenhua/wenming*) that would include specific comments on India, the Asianist dimension of the subject will be set aside in this article. Furthermore, although they made random references to India, the most important Asianist Chinese pleas (Li Dazhao 1919 and Sun 1924) had no use for the concept of *wenhua* in a geographic or national sense – Sun 1924 used only once the expression “Eastern civilisation of China” (*Zhongguo de Dongfang wenming* 中國的東方文明) – and their remarks about India remained strictly political. Sun Yat-sen employed mostly the term *wenhua* as a way of behaving in the political realm when he opposed a “kingly culture” (*wangdao wenhua* 王道文化) to a “hegemon culture” (*badao wenhua* 霸道文化); on Sun's Asianism, see Weber 2018, 198-207.

7. One needs to note here that there are many different ways to express the idea of ‘the East’ in Chinese characters. The two most common expressions are *Dongfang* 東方 and *Dongyang* 東洋. We could be tempted to use them as synonyms, but they seem to have different uses in Asia. If the

Chinese mostly favored the first expression, the Japanese used more frequently the latter (*Tōyō* 東洋) – Stefan Tanaka even considered *Tōyō* to be “essentially a twentieth-century Japanese concept” (Tanaka 1993, 4). However, aside from a brief description of the meaning of the characters used in the compound – *fang* evoking “orientation” while *yang* would be “ocean/vastness” – the genuine difference between the two terms has never been, to my knowledge, questioned in the academic literature. In China, since *Dongyang* originally served as a toponym – the territories of the Eastern Sea, *i.e.* Japan (Chen 2001, 370) – it often kept this connotation (for a general presentation of the semantic history of *Dongyang/Tōyō*, see Saitō 2005, pp. 43-77). As the most famous pro-West Japanese intellectuals of the Meiji era wished to distinguish Japan from *Tōyō*, one can however wonder whether using the word *Dongfang* may have not been a tactical move of the Chinese to bring Japan back in an ‘Eastern frame’.

8. Such a phenomenon is also noticeable in Japan. Despite the claim that *Tōyō* meant “that which was not the Occident” (Tsuda Sokichi quoted by Tanaka 1993, 4), histories concerned with the East often dealt mainly about China, and Japan’s relationship with it – a point partly admitted by Tsuda himself when he noted that for the Sinophiles the “so-called *Tōyō* is primarily China” (Tanaka 1993, 5). In fact, the concept of *Tōyō* was profoundly connected to the debates regarding the historical relation of Japan to China, the former centre of the world (*Chūgoku* 中国) now considered through the new appellation of *Shina* 支那 (Chen 2001). As such, it helped the Japanese in the creation of “their modern identity” (Tanaka 1993, 11). While Japan tended to distance itself from a China-centred worldview in order to join with the Western great powers, China was inevitably linked to the idea of an “inferior Orient”. On the contrary, for the Chinese, the notion of ‘the Orient’ may have served positively as a means to reinvent their former centrality. By assimilating China to *Donfang* they probably unconsciously traded their former world-centrality for an Eastern-centrality in a bipolar system.

9. The role of academic institutions and the emergence of specific scientific fields in which positive knowledge about other countries, peoples and cultures are formulated cannot be overlooked. As a matter of fact, although discourses on Indian culture were not at first produced by academics, it is they who gave it a historical authenticity. This situation is quite comparable to the case of Japan, where discourses on the Orient were intrinsically linked to the constitution of the scientific discipline ‘Eastern history’ (*Tōyōshi* 東洋史) (cf. Tanaka 1993). Regarding earlier modern Chinese scholars who worked on their own on Indian texts, see the article by T.H. Barrett “The Early Modern Origins of Chinese Indology” in the present volume.

10. See his works on the subject collated in the 14th volume of the *Yinbingshi heji* 飲冰室合集 of 1936.

11. Li spoke of India using the traditional term *Tianzhu* 天竺. I have, however, never encountered an author speaking of *Tianzhu guocui* 天竺國粹, *Tianzhu wenming* 天竺文明 or even *Tianzhu wenhua* 天竺文化.

12. See a detailed list in Zhang 1994 (205–230)

13. I have unfortunately not succeeded in identifying the original document in the *Collected works* of Gandhi (Gandhi 1999).

14. In his text, Teng uses the formula “in the history of Indian culture”; however, if we consider the Chinese – *zai Yindu de wenhua shi shang* 在印度的文化史上 (Teng 1921, 63) – the determinative of the syntagma is “history” (*shi* 史), while the subordination between “cultural” or “civilisational history” and India is a loose form of junction. There is a subtle difference between *Yindu wenhua* and *Yindu zhi wenhua* (or with the use of any form of *de* 的/地): “Without *de*, modifier and head are in close junction, presenting the modifying notion as an inbuilt characteristic” (Wiedenhof 2016). A systematic study of this problem ought to be conducted, but as of now, it appears to me that in the literature I have browsed so far, when an author referred to ‘Indian culture’ as a historical and anthropological collective category – the third category of culture in Jenks’s typology (Jenks 2005, 11–12), *i.e.* culture as generally confused with

‘civilisation’ – they always preferred *Yindu wenhua*. *Yindu zhi wenhua* can generally be understood as the Indian version of the universal phenomenon of culture. However, there is no general solution, and one should better proceed with a hermeneutical text by text approach.

15. I proceeded here in two stages. First, I looked for these words in titles of articles published by relying on the 1833–1949 Chinese Periodical Full-text Databases (*Wan Qing qikan Minguo shiqi qikan quanwen shuju ku* 晚清期刊、民国时期期刊全文数据库) developed by the Shanghai Library (available at <http://www.cnbkysy.cn/>). Then I looked into the texts by searching in full two key periodicals of the time: the *Shenbao* and the *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌). The choice of these publications was justified not only by the fact that they are easily accessible, but also because they presented themselves as mainstream journals with an important circulation. Since the aim of this article is to inquire into the place of ‘Indian culture’ in the intellectual debates about cultural diversity, my problem was not to identify lesser-known and hardly read periodicals written only for specialists. Furthermore I should clarify that the full-text research on the *Eastern Miscellany* was realized through the website www.cpem.cp.com.cn, a website not specifically designed for this type of research. In fact, it is obvious that the numbers given below are not exact since I found texts during my research that employed the term *Yindu de wenhua* and were not in the statistics of the website (for instance Teng 1921); it seems that the website does not consider junction particles such as *de* 的 or *zhi* 之. Therefore, the numbers given below should be taken with precaution and only be used to indicate a general tendency. They do not give a precise factual description of the presence of these words in the literature of the time.

16. Under this term the author referred to the museums, the libraries and the research centres established by the British.

17. As mentioned in the introduction, at the end of the Qing dynasty, histories of India as a ‘lost country’ existed, but these books mainly focused on how India was defeated. By “histories of India” I refer here to books that were concerned with the history of this country/continent in the *longue durée*, or what we could be tempted to call broad histories of Indian civilisation from antiquity to the time of their authors. To give a comparison, such books could already be found in Japan: Takakuwa 1903 had known many reeditions under several titles; see also Tokiwa 1907 and Shigematsu 1915. This last book dedicated its second half to the ‘culture’ (*bunka* 文化) of ancient India (pp. 57–109) but the term obviously did not mean “culture” in a modern anthropological sense, as it was specifically concerned with Brahmanic philosophy and scientific knowledge as well as literature in Sanskrit. Takakuwa 1903 had also already several sections dealing with *Indo bunka* 印度文化 in the sense of knowledge and sciences. The case of the historian Takakuwa Komakichi 高桑駒吉 (1869–1927) is furthermore fascinating because he was the writer of numerous history books dedicated to the “cultural or civilisational histories” (*bunmeishi* 文明史 or *bunkashi* 文化史) of the West, the East, Japan, China and India. He moreover included India in his conception of the East. However, he is a figure still completely unknown to the academia; and one may have doubt on whether his writings may have circulated among Chinese intellectuals: his *History of Chinese culture* would be discussed by several Chinese historians around 1926 (it was even translated into Chinese) but I could not find any Chinese comments on his works concerned with India.

18. Since there were not that many specialists on India at that time, I suspect that Tengzhu may have been a pen name of Teng Ruoqu, mentioned above.

19. In his preface, Liu advocated that Indian history ought to be studied by the Chinese since both countries had shared an important part of history: “Speaking from the point of view of culture, [one must say] that China and India have a particularly close relationship” (Liu 1926, 1).

20. In comparison, there were 37 occurrences of *Zhongguo wenhua* and 47 of *Xifang wenhua*.

21. Almost all the articles in this special issue about Gandhi used both the word India and *wenhua*, but only W. reunited them in the expression *Yindu zhi wenhua*. It is also worth noting that the

word *wenhua* was much used, at that time, in the translation of Tagore (e.g. Ziyi 1922). It was a term oriented toward the contemporaneous.

22. In comparison there were 23 occurrences of *Zhongguo wenming* and 34 of *Xifang wenming*. The lesser amount of “country+*wenming*” phrases compared to “country+*wenhua*” illustrates the progressive transition from *wenming* to *wenhua* in the cultural vocabulary.

23. At least that seems to be the case in China, but simultaneously one needs to point out the fact that Africa, the Middle East or South America were often absent of the picture. As such the sum of the East and the West didn’t necessarily amount to the totality of the planet. When Easterners spoke of the East, they mainly referred to themselves in a national sense. Furthermore, one can conjecture that in their understanding of the world, there were peoples and countries that did not even belong to Civilisation. If the Japanese, the Chinese and the Indians were all fighting against the label of “semi- or half- civilised countries”, and considered themselves as “civilised”, they did not necessarily believe that their non-Western neighbours shared this adjective, and even at times relegated them to the categories of “half-civilised” or “barbaric”. Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤 諭吉 (1935-1901), for instance, adhered to the idea that India and China were only half-civilised, an idea that should in his opinion encourage Japan to take its distance from Asia. Furthermore some intellectuals from all around the world dreamt of a synthesis of the East and West, an intellectual move that clearly implied that those notions went far beyond a simple problem of geography.

24. *Dongyang wenhua* was also used in four additional articles during this timeframe. It is worth noting that there were only eight articles published in the *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 from 1904 to 1948 that employed the phrase *Dongyang wenhua*. The first occurrence was published in 1917 and dealt with Asianism; and India was obviously not included in this Orient (Junshi 1917).

25. This text did not make any reference to India. The East was again limited to China.

26. Here I will set aside the academic books specifically dedicated to the topic and consider what was said about it in the mainstream newspapers and magazines.

27. It is important to underline that such a narrative set a historical precedent for the discourses promoting a selective appropriation of Western culture. On the one hand, intellectuals who more or less supported a wholesale westernisation adhered to the idea that there was only one unique Civilisation – seen as a ladder with the West at the top and Asian countries at a lower level – and rejected the idea that India had any influence on China. On the other hand, people who considered that cultural or civilisational diversity existed and that China should adopt the positive elements of the West while discarding the negative ones often maintained that this process of selective appropriation had already taken place in the past with the introduction of Buddhism. The case of Hu Shi is here exemplary: when he became more and more infatuated with the idea of wholesale westernization of China in the twenties, “China’s indianization” became a catastrophe in his writings (Sheel 2014).

28. According to Peter Beyer, and most scholarship on the subject, the main intellectuals of the May Fourth era “rejected the contemporary value of religion” (Beyer 2006, 235). However, Meyer 2014 has presented a more nuanced description of the attitude of the Chinese toward the matter.

29. Wang would later become a renowned specialist of the history of music, but he was at that time only a local correspondent for the *Shenbao* in Germany.

30. I am personally struck by the fact that despite being a relative economic success no Chinese intellectuals, except perhaps Hu Yuzhi (Yuzhi 1921) – who was ultimately the one who made Indian *Kulturpessimismus* audible in China – ever commented on the thesis that Tagore had developed in *Sadhana*. Liang Shuming gave a hyperbolic illustration of this problem when he wrote that “Tagore never speculates on any philosophies and only composes poems” (sic) (Liang 1921, 513).

31. Chen is one of the very rare authors to discuss the problem of culture with clear and complete references to the Western, Japanese and Chinese literatures. This article, for instance, has 99 footnotes of references and nuanced comments.
32. Several key intellectual figures of the time, such as Cai Yuanpei and Huang Yanpei 黃炎培 (1878-1965), participated in its inaugural venue.
33. It is also through one of Liang's associations, the "Lecture Society" (*Jiangxue she* 講學社), that Tagore was invited to China.
34. Furthermore Liang's "Collective Study Association" (*Gongxue she* 共學社) did not edit any translation of works related to India (except for a few elements in H.G. Wells's *The Outline of History*). In comparison, Russia, and notably Tolstoy, deserved much more attention (Zhang 2006, 140-144).
35. In a later article, Luo would reduce his critical tone toward India, but he would still write that the Buddha Sakyamuni made the synthesis of earlier Indian schools of thought (Luo 1925, 5) and would thereby reduce India merely to Buddhism.
36. The depiction of the Orient and of the place of India within it by Japanese intellectuals started to evolve in the early twenties, giving place to more nuanced and academic-based discussions – something that however did not prevent their political instrumentalisation (a topic largely explored in the research related to Asianism). As a matter of fact, in the twenties, when Shiratori Kurakichi (1865-1942) 白鳥庫吉 and Ichimura Sanjiro 市村瓚次郎 (1864-1947) – the fathers of "Oriental history" – retired, and their former students became more and more specialised in specific geographical regions of the East, historical research developed toward a more accurate and comparative direction (Tanaka 1993, 234-239). China had not, however, achieved such level of institutionalisation and specialisation at the same period. Academic research on India had just started and it was seemingly not very influential on the debates.
37. In his *Chinese Culture of Tomorrow* (*Zhongguo zhi mingri wenhua* 中國之明日文化) – a book that also produced a tripartite division of cultures – , Zhang Junmai presented his own work as a response to Liang's book, and would later underline the fact that aside from Liang's, no book had been published on the subject (Zhang 1935, 1)
38. Chen 2010 speaks of hundreds of articles (p. 135). For a discussion of a selection of them, cf. Alitto 1986, 126-134.
39. Wesolowski 2005 offers probably the best-synthesised presentation of Liang Shuming's philosophy of culture.
40. Two years before, he had already written that "Indians fundamentally reject worldly life" (Liang 1919, 60).
41. Incidentally, Liang believed that the West was already proceeding to this reorientation. With their growing interest for socialism, the Westerners were, according to Liang, leaving the Western path of moving forward and conquering the material world to convert to the Chinese social path of harmony. On the sinicisation of Western culture, cf. Liang 1921, 502-512.
42. Regarding Liang Shuming's teleological metanarrative of cultures, and its link with the problem of modernity, cf. Major 2017.
43. This mode of reasoning also pervaded Liang's attitude toward the West which was reduced to utilitarianism, and China epitomised by Confucius.
44. Tagore's visit to China, despite being a short-term failure, would, however, foster Chinese interest in their southern neighbour; discussions about Indian *wenhua*, understood in a more general and historic perspective, would flourish during and after his stay.

INDEX

Keywords: concepts, culture, civilisation, conservatism, Dongfang zazhi, debate, indology, Tagore, May Fourth Movement, Orient, Eastern culture, religion, Buddhism, chauvinism, Chen Jiayi, Liang Shuming

Geographical index: India, China

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